

A

LETTER

TO THE

FEVER COMMITTEE,

ON THEIR HITHERTO

Unsuccessful Attempts

TO RESTRAIN

TYPHUS CONTAGION IN GLASGOW;

ON

THE PRESENT EXTENT OF THE EPIDEMIC;

AND ON THE

NEW, OR ADDITIONAL, MEANS

THAT MAY BE FOUND REQUISITE

IN ORDER TO ENSURE

ITS ABATEMENT, OR SUPPRESSION.

By RICHARD MILLAR, M. D.

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ONE OF THE PHYSICIANS TO THE ROYAL INFIRMARY, AND CONSULTING PHYSICIAN TO
THE CITY POOR, AND TO THE LOCK HOSPITAL.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Letter here announced took its origin from the following circumstances.—Having been frequently consulted, for a year past, concerning the best mode of suppressing our Contagious Fever, the author has uniformly, both verbally, and by publication, proposed a plan, as appeared to him, the only one adequate to the purpose; but of the expedience, or necessity, of which, he has never been able to produce a similar conviction in the minds of those possessed of sufficient power for its execution.—Time, he thinks, has confirmed the soundness of his views: in his capacity, therefore, of Consulting Physician to the City Poor, the principal sufferers, by their neglect, it seemed a point of duty, even independent of other considerations, to bring his proposal, a second time, in the manner he has now done, under the review of the public.—Farther: having been appointed, three months ago, at a meeting of Citizens in the Town Hall, one of the two Medical Assessors to the Fever Committee, it is possible he may have been considered, since that period, as implicated, to a certain degree at least, in the proceedings of these Gentlemen. To obviate such impression, as well as to free himself from responsibility for a system of measures of which he does not approve, and over which he never possessed either influence, or control, no better expedient occurred than the following appeal. The knowledge that the sentiments it contains meet the entire approbation of a great majority of his professional brethren, supplied an additional motive for resorting, on this occasion, to the press.

GENTLEMEN,

On the 22d of July last, at a Meeting of Citizens held in the Town Hall, a Paper was read, bearing for title, *A Report of the Fever Committee*. This Document has been since printed, in more than one form, under the sanction of the Body whose name it assumes, so as to remove all doubts that might have been, otherwise, entertained, concerning its authenticity.—Extraordinary as it may have appeared, in many respects, its perusal, when first published, could hardly fail of suggesting three queries, each of them calculated to excite no inconsiderable solicitude in the public mind of Glasgow;—what is the present state of our Contagious Fever; whence has arisen the failure of every attempt, hitherto made, to restrain, or subdue it; what are the new, or additional, measures that must be resorted to, ere we can reasonably expect its decline, or extinction? These are topics of which no subsequent amendment of the City's health has, as yet, diminished either the interest, or importance: they furnish, therefore,

a subject for the present Letter, unfortunately still invested with all its original claims to the attention of the community.

At the time, Gentlemen, when your Committee was first formed, I was disposed, along with many others, joyfully to hail its institution. Some such measure seemed imperiously demanded, and it was no unpleasing spectacle to see a number of respectable citizens uniting for so benevolent, and beneficial, a purpose; even neglecting their own lucrative concerns, that they might succour the diseased, and the needy, a conduct universally meeting, as it merited, the most unqualified applause. To those, however, who more narrowly inspected the nature of the new Establishment, some doubts of success, even at this early period, must have inevitably suggested themselves; some melancholy forebodings could hardly fail to occur. Certain circumstances with respect to it, seemed of evil augury. Various individuals belonging to a Committee of unfortunate memory, whose conduct will be mentioned afterwards, I mean that appointed for the suppression of our Fever, by the Town's Hospital, in November last, were associated with this, and what was of more consequence, there seemed a

fundamental flaw, or error, in the very structure of the association. From the new Board of Health all persons of the healing profession were observed to be excluded; an experiment was to be tried, how far an office, purely, and professedly medical, could be exercised without a particle of knowledge in physic, and the name, accordingly, of neither Physician, nor Surgeon, was to be perceived in the lists.

In the observations that follow, on the subject of your Committee, the writer of this letter, Gentlemen, has no personalities to indulge: he has not even a pretext for such; he is in habits of acquaintance with most of you, and he fully appreciates the respectability of your characters. On this occasion he is to consider you, as it were, merely in the abstract, in your newly assumed medical capacity only, simply, as members of a Board of Health. His remarks will be directed to measures entirely, not at all to men. In his examination of the former, however, he means to put no restraints upon his opinions, except those of candour, and truth. The safety of a great city, you yourselves will agree with him, must not be compromised for a punctilio, and in canvassing your plans and pretensions, he intends to use a freedom of discussion the most un-

bounded, such as the importance of the subject demands.

Notwithstanding the inauspicious circumstances under which you commenced your labours, sanguine people did not despair of success.* No other Board of Health, it was true, had ever been heard of, without medical associates, yet it was hoped that what was defective within, might be supplied from without, and it was well known, that no member of Faculty would refuse his assistance. It had not been sufficiently considered, that in order to perceive our own deficiencies in any branch of knowledge, a certain degree of acquaintance with that branch is absolutely requisite, and that where this is wanting, nothing is more difficult than to distinguish those occasions where the counsel of others better informed than ourselves is indispensable, from those where it may be, with safety, declined. Such appears to have been exactly the predicament of your Committee. With the laws of disease, or contagion, it need not excite surprize if you were too little

* The Author frankly confesses, he himself was in the number of those sanguine people; the delusion, however, was not lasting.

conversant, to perceive your own defect of information, and nothing was more natural than that you should neglect seeking advice, even in instances where it was most imperiously demanded, a misfortune only to be avoided by having medical men for integrant members of your Body, constantly sitting at your Board, and participating in your deliberations.* The con-

* In thus denying you medical knowledge, Gentlemen, I trust you will not accuse me of want of due courtesy towards you—such sort of information was not to be expected, and there can be no reproach in not knowing what has never been learned—you will allow me to say, however, and I say it without the least intention of personal offence, that it appears to me, you have too often overstepped the bounds of your province. Your appropriate business, as I conceive, was, by the respectability and rank you hold in Glasgow, to obtain adequate funds for the suppression of our Epidemic, as well as to preside over their disbursement, but neither to dictate professional plans for the purpose yourselves, nor refuse those recommended by adequate authority, far less to interfere in the details of their execution. All this, it is obvious, must be better left to your medical Counsellors, and Assistants. If I am rightly informed, however, such has been by no means your practice: on the contrary, it is currently reported, that after you have heard the opinion of a Physician or Surgeon, it has been common for you to retire within your Conclave, and to debate, not as you have an undoubted right to do, on the practicability as to funds, &c. of the measure, but simply on its expedience, or fitness, for lessening, or extinguishing, the fever, as if you were more competent to judge in these points than your advisers.—An opinion conceived in the same spirit, and professed to me by one of your warmest supporters, a Gentleman at present in very high civic office, is too amusing to be passed over in silence. Observing to this

sequences have been such as fully to justify the fears for your success, that occurred at your first formation, and were so likely to be inspired by the original flaw of your constitution. *Your failure has been signal, and complete.* So far from destroying the contagion you had undertaken to extirpate, it has amplified, and expanded, under your hands, and is, at this moment, more alarmingly prevalent than seven months ago, at the time you commenced your career. This is a fact, Gentlemen, to which, I presume you will concur with me, too much publicity cannot be given; more especially considering the

Gentleman, one day, that there was neither Physician, nor Surgeon, in your Committee, "No," said he, "nor is there occasion for any. I grant that where one patient in fever is concerned, a medical man may be necessary, but I maintain that if there be a number of fever patients collected together, as in an Hospital, this necessity ceases, and any indifferent person is just as competent to take charge of them, as the most skilful Physician or Surgeon." Whether such notions pervade your Association, I know not, but while such are abroad, more especially among persons of influence in the Community, it seems vain to harbour hopes for the destruction of our Fever.—I would simply here ask a question. Supposing that by any chance, the City of Glasgow were engaged in some extensive Mercantile, or Manufacturing, undertaking, would it be expedient to chuse a Committee of Management out of the Faculty of Physicians, and Surgeons, carefully excluding every Merchant, and Manufacturer? The application of this to the Fever Committee in its present state, without a single medical member, is too obvious to require illustration. The cases are quite parallel.

many groundless rumours so often propagated on the subject: it is one, I add, that for the general safety, cannot be too forcibly impressed on the mind of the community.* Connected with this failure of the Committee, ought to be mentioned some circumstances of anterior date. Their importance, as well as alliance with our present subject, will be seen by the following narrative.

So long ago as September and October, 1817, our Fever had assumed a very threatening aspect. It appeared also to have been gradually augmenting, during the six preceding years, and judging of the future by the past, there was reason to apprehend that it had not yet reached its height, but was destined to commit still more extensive ravages. Nothing was done however, or properly speaking, attempted to be done, against it, till the month of November. At this period, copious heads of direction for its relief, and suppression, were drawn up, under the auspices of the Governors of the

* In conversation, lately, it was asserted to me by a Gentleman, that there did not at present exist in Glasgow more fever than was customary, or than might be always expected from the populousness of the place; and he quoted medical authority. This is ludicrous enough; perhaps something worse. In the process of delusion, the next step, it is likely, will be to deny any extraordinary prevalence of Typhus in Ireland.

Town's Hospital, at a meeting of medical Gentlemen connected with the Municipality; a Fever Hospital was fixed upon, and all but fitted up, when this scheme, however salutary, and indispensable, was, by those entrusted with its execution, all at once, and without explanation, abandoned.* Here, Gentlemen, was the first grand mistake with respect to our Fever, and the public has never, even yet, been aware of its magnitude. I now take it upon me, therefore, to affirm, that had the plan been carried into effect, with a very little aid, (always including, too, the Infirmary,) our Fever might have readily been suppressed in the course of three or four months, and I add, that if at this early period, on account of the (comparatively speaking) as yet limited extent of the disease, such a sum as a thousand, or fifteen

* Whether the unaccountable dereliction of this scheme was owing to this Committee itself, or their constituents, it is of no consequence to enquire; to the sufferers the mischief has been the same.—As for the brief narrative inserted above, it became absolutely requisite as mere matter of explanation to the public. In perusing the commencement of your Report, an uninformed reader might be led to suppose, that with respect to our Fever, its spread, means of suppression, &c. every opinion, or proposal, as yet started, had originated solely with your Committee, and that on these points nothing had been devised, or heard of, till the time you undertook your office. How remote such opinion would be from the truth, you yourselves must know.

hundred pounds, had, for the purpose, been put at the disposal of medical intelligence, instead of seven or eight hundred, there would not have been, at this moment, sixty cases of Typhus to be found within the whole circle of Glasgow, suburbs, and adjoining villages. Mark the contrast of our present situation in a mere pecuniary point of view. It appears from unquestionable evidence, as will be more fully explained afterwards, that you have not only expended a much larger sum already, though without making the slightest impression on the Fever, but have further entailed upon the city a tax of above £9000 a-year, in all human likelihood, with the same fruitless result.—But it is not the mere useless expenditure of money that is to direct our estimate here, Gentlemen; it is not simply the balance of profit and loss we are called to calculate—there are other, and darker, items, to swell the account, other considerations to press upon attention. It may be asked, what is to indemnify us for time, and opportunity lost; who shall ensure the ultimate success of our present measures, expensive as they are, of which I confidently predict the failure, unless an entirely new system be adopted; above all, what is to compensate for the sufferings of disease that might have been prevented, or the waste of life that

might have been saved? Indeed, if it be considered ever so lightly, what a mass of human misery, past, present, and to come, might have been averted by the timely completion of the above scheme, other feelings besides regret must inevitably be excited; on these, however, I have no inclination of dwelling; it is sufficient for the present narrative to state, that to this abortive attempt for checking the Fever, a long period of apathy succeeded, the disease being suffered to rage without let, or controul, on the part of the public, from November to April, or more than a quarter of a year. How long this indifference might have lasted, had it confined itself merely to the lower orders, it may be difficult to predict, but having crept to the upper ranks, and having attacked some individuals of better condition, the fears of the more opulent were again excited, and it is to this alarm that we owe the *first formation of our present Fever Committee*. To that body I now return.

How little has been done against our contagious Fever, by this Institution, has already been explained, as well as the primary cause of failure, the exclusion of medical associates, a fault, I am afraid, not very uniformly redeemed by any very

strong disposition on the part of its present members, to avail themselves, at least in essentials, of the counsels of those practitioners willing, and competent, to advise them. And yet nothing could be plainer, or more obvious, than the road which your Committee were to pursue, simply to *remove from their houses the great mass of the sick, and deposit them in suitable receptacles*, so as not only to facilitate their cure, but by secluding the infected from the sound, to put an end to the contagion itself. Such is the plan that ought to have been adopted by you the moment after you commenced your office ; a plan equally founded on common sense, and the sanction of those medical men who best deserved your confidence. It is one, however, that has been constantly inculcated upon you in vain.—How little likelihood, indeed, there was, that this and other salutary measures should be followed by a Board so imperfectly constituted as yours, will appear by many future instances, and the following anecdote may serve for present illustration :—Thus, conversing with one of your number, otherwise a man of superior intellect, and information, I happened to ask the reason why additional accommodation was not prepared for fever patients, and if the Committee, in this delay, acted by advice of any Physician, or

Surgeon? I was answered, with an air of triumph, That he and his colleagues needed here no medical interference; for they acted, in this instance, on much surer grounds, namely, the evidence of facts.* And what was the overwhelming fact thus exultingly brought forward? Merely, that for the important epoch of nine days, that is, from 30th of May till 8th June, (I go by the Report) the District Surgeons had not quoted quite so many cases as formerly! whence, it being concluded, that the infection had ceased of itself, or was about to cease, it was inferred that no further exertion was requisite. That a conclusion demonstrating such total unacquaintance with the most ordinary laws of contagion should have been drawn by a body so long assuming to itself all the functions of a Board of Health, could never have been believed, had it not been testified by themselves. These gentlemen, surely, ought to have known, that it is the very essence of contagious diseases to exhibit temporary cessations, and then to break out again with redoubled fury; and that this has happened to the whole tribe of them on record, from the famous plague of Athens, downwards. I am afraid, too, Gentlemen, that your logic here

* In the above conversation there was nothing confidential; there can be no impropriety, consequently, in narrating it.

was hardly more correct than your medicine. For the inference deduced, adequate premises were altogether wanting: your Committee had no accounts whatever of the existing state of the Fever, in the Calton, Bridgeton, Gorbals, Anderston, some of them the great seats, as every body knows, of the disease; they had before them merely the reports of their own town districts. Nevertheless, upon such trivial grounds, do you appear to have intermitted the most important part of your operations, and that, too, for a considerable length of time. To be sure, if we consider what the amount of these exertions, till very lately, has been, this remissness will not seem of much consequence. Thus, your own declaration informs us, that till the 29th of May, you had no room in your hospital for more than 34 patients, or, I believe, correctly speaking, no adequate room for more than 28: and that the *maximum* of your accommodation, at the period you presented your Report in the Town Hall, did not exceed 60 or 64, at a time, too, when if any expectations of suppressing the contagion were to be rationally entertained, you ought to have had Receiving Houses for at least six times the number. Other instances of similar want of knowledge, and consequent error in management, may be gathered from the same

extraordinary document. Thus we observe you boasting of the great promptitude with which you removed the bad cases into the Relief Hospital, or Infirmary, while many of the mild ones were suffered to continue in their original abodes, and of the vast number of houses cleansed by you, while many others were still left without purification. Here, Gentlemen, a double error is manifested. It is not true, though evidently believed by you, and the belief acted upon, that any security is afforded, either against the spread of the disorder, or its malignity, by the mildness it assumes in the individual, or individuals, from whom it originates as a source; a law holding equally in other contagious distempers, as small pox, scarlet fever, measles, &c. Nor is there any chance of suppressing the infection, by cleansing a great number of houses, so long as a considerable portion is abandoned to its original impurity. Now this circumstance actually befel the labour of the Committee, as appears from unquestionable evidence, furnished partly by their published Report, partly by their unprinted Record. From these authentic sources it is learned, that, since the time you commenced your office, no less than 552 patients have been allowed to remain within their own abodes, where they must have been con-

stantly, not only generating, but disseminating, contagion, none of them being sent either to the Relief Hospital, or Infirmary ; and if to these be added, the multitudes under a similar predicament, not only in the town itself, * but our populous suburbs of Anderston, Gorbals, Bridgeton, and Calton, the real value of your labours, so far as regards the extermination of the disease, will be very readily understood. It is only, Gentlemen, you, and the public, may rest assured, *by a universal, or nearly universal, sweep of the sick into Fever Hospitals, joined to a universal, or nearly universal, purification of their dwellings*, that any thing is to be hoped for in the way of suppressing our Epidemic. So far as this grand object is concerned, all the rest is folly :—It is worse than folly. By having the appearance of doing something, it begets a false security, while at the same

* In the interior of the City, besides those of the District poor, who, for want of room, cannot be received into the Relief Hospital, or Infirmary, there are two other classes constantly keeping up the contagion. One is a set of paupers, who, from different reasons, seek rather to conceal, than disclose, their disorder, and who, of course, receive no medical aid whatever : The other, a far more numerous body, and whose lists, of late, have been rapidly encreasing, consists of persons in condition above poverty, but who are, at the same time, entirely unknown to the more opulent members of the Community.

time, nothing of actual importance is effected.* There is another part of your proceedings, Gentlemen, of which I cannot help disapproving, and on which I have taken the liberty of animadverting elsewhere, I mean the erection of your whole Fever houses in one spot, the Spring Gardens ground.

Why they should have been thus all huddled together in the same place, I can see no sufficient

* The complete efficacy of the plan here recommended has been practically evinced by various instances, both in the city and neighbourhood. In the Works at St. Rollocks, three families, last summer, were attacked with fever, but being instantly removed to an empty house, and their habitations cleansed, the contagion was, from that moment, suppressed. The same happy result, from the same means of seclusion and purification, it is well known, took place lately, under the direction of the medical attendants, in our Bridewell, and Magdalene Asylum. A still more remarkable example of perfect success from the like processes, occurred, about three months ago, in the neighbouring village of Long Govan. At this period, the inhabitants were exceedingly alarmed by the disorder breaking out, simultaneously, at both ends of the place; but a meeting being speedily convened, measures equally prompt and judicious, were adopted; the infected were instantly removed, and not only their houses, but those of the whole village, thoroughly cleansed, and white-washed. The event was such as might have been expected, the disease having never shewn its face since. In this transaction, so creditable to all parties, the zeal and intelligence of the worthy clergyman, qualities never wanting where the good of his parishioners is concerned, I have great pleasure in saying, were most eminently conspicuous.

reason, while on the contrary, several very cogent arguments might be urged for a more equal distribution of them, or one more suited to the localities of the disease. Thus, it is well known, that there are few, or no fevers, in this district, or its vicinity, and for such as are to be met with, the Infirmary is much more than sufficient: besides, that building itself is exceedingly ill adapted, on account of its remote situation, to cases of this sort, because the whole must be brought from a distance, always to the inconvenience, and injury, sometimes to the absolute destruction, of the patients. This last circumstance has been particularly ascertained by several of the District Surgeons, who have repeatedly assured me, that when the sick under their care were moved, during a certain period of the disease, more especially between the 8th, and 11th, day, either to the Relief Hospital, or Infirmary, they very seldom recovered the shock, or fatigue, of the journey, but too often, and from no other cause, apparently, sunk under the disease. This, you will own, Gentlemen, to be a very serious consideration; and surely you will confess, that your Committee ought to have paused a little, ere they came to the final resolution of running up the whole of their buildings, in this very distant corner.

Your attachment to this spot, indeed, as an exclusive site for your Hospitals, seems altogether extraordinary. Among other proofs, we observe you lamenting, in your Report, that your Bricklayers, while engaged about one of your buildings, had, in consequence of some absurd panic, revolted against your authority, and deserted their labours. I confess I cannot agree with you in considering this accident as matter of much lamentation. Had the obstinacy, or folly, of these men, induced you to abandon this part of your undertaking altogether, I would have regarded it as a circumstance rather to be rejoiced at, than deplored; and it certainly would have been no disadvantage, at least, to your more distant patients. But with the original Spring Garden Mansion-house already in your possession, and the Infirmary in its immediate vicinity, why build here at all? Was it utterly impossible to discover a Receptacle for Fever except what was to be erected in this new portion of your municipal domain? Was there no untenanted dwelling to be met with, no empty habitation in the great City of Glasgow, to be hired, begged, or borrowed? If stone edifices were not to be procured, surely other resources lay open to you—why not pitch tents in the Green, or run up wooden sheds, either

of them expedients, during a summer unparalleled for its mildness, perfectly adequate to all your purposes?—These are questions, Gentlemen, to which I am afraid, neither you nor your friends have answers ready. The subject cannot fail to be unpleasant, and I abstain from pressing it farther.

By the enlargement of your premises announced as soon to take place after the time you published your Report, I perceive you expected to have room for one hundred and sixty patients; by an addition now making, I learn you will speedily be enabled to admit into your Wards forty more, so as, finally, to accommodate two hundred.* The apparatus, I grant, is respectable, but why has it been so long delayed? Had it been prepared in any reasonable time after you commenced your labours, it might have proved successful: had one half of it been provided by the Poor House Committee, we would not, at present, have been discussing the means of suppressing Typhus in Glasgow.† But both opportunities, however

* Hitherto the greatest number in your House, as I am informed, has been 160: by Report of 30th October last, it amounted to 156.

† It is to be mentioned here, once for all, that wherever in this Letter, blame is imputed to the Poor House Committee, error of judgment, and

precious, have been lost, and the contagion suffered to spread so widely as now wholly to elude your grasp. In the mean time, your scheme, added to its inefficacy, is loaded with enormous expence: the public indeed, I apprehend, are, by no means, aware of the cost of your preparations. By your own shewing, and taking in the Infirmary, though exclusive of the original outlay of the Buildings, and price of the ground, it cannot, when completed, be less than *nine thousand three hundred, and sixty pounds*, a-year.* But after enduring this heavy burden for the time

nothing else, is to be understood. To the unquestionable uprightness of their intentions, the author has already borne testimony in another place, (See Lett. to the Lord Provost, p. 13.)

He is accused, it seems, of enmity towards the Fever Committee, as well as indiscriminate opposition to their measures. This is mere misrepresentation. Zeal, activity, and the most benevolent views, he has never denied them, nor the merit of various useful proceedings. Differences of opinion have arisen, no doubt, and there are three points on which he more particularly dissents from them, and is likely, in future, to dissent; the scantiness, and still more the tardiness, of their accommodation for the Typhus Poor; the exclusive site of their Hospitals in the Spring Gardens ground; and their conduct towards the Infirmary. This last may probably form the subject of a second Letter.

* Such is the expence for 300 patients; viz. 200 in the Relief Hospital, and 100 in the Infirmary, the last of whom must be paid for by the public as well as the former, calculated, according to the rate laid down in your Report, at 12/. a-week, for each patient.

specified, will we be rewarded by the attainment of our purpose? Will our Fever be annihilated, at the end of the twelvemonth, will it be even lessened in frequency? Is our payment to be continued annually, or supposing the disease to go on doubling itself as it has hitherto done, is our tax to be doubled each ensuing year? These are questions of the last importance to our present inquiry, let us examine them with calmness, and impartiality.—It will readily be conceded, that if there continue, as at present, in our city, and suburbs, several hundreds of Typhus patients lying outside the walls of our Hospitals, and of course, not only generating, but disseminating, contagion, there exists little likelihood that the disorder will terminate of itself. Such copious sources of infection must be previously shut up, or at least very much reduced in number.* And what

* In one district alone of Glasgow, and within the limits of the last 13 months, nearly 900 cases of Typhus are to be found noted in the Books of the superintending Surgeon. The following extract of a letter to me from that Gentleman, dated 26th October, shews, in a striking point of view, both the original extent, and subsequent increase, of the disorder, during that short period. He says, "From the 1st of October 1817, till the 1st of June 1818, including a period of 8 months, I treated about 400 cases of Typhus Fever; while from the 1st of June to the present time, embracing only between 4 and 5 months, I have attended nearly 500 cases of the same disease." Of these patients little more than 100 were sent to

reasons are there to induce belief in so happy a consummation? I know of two only that can be assigned, and from these, I shall, by no means, detract whatever weight they may be supposed to possess. One is the present mildness of the malady, whence it may be inferred, that having already attained its height, it is now on the decline, so as to be readily subdued by your present system of measures. Another argument on the same side, is, that Epidemics often experience strange,

the Relief Hospital, or Infirmary, so that the remainder, or from *seven to eight hundred*, being left in their own houses, must have been constantly generating, and distributing, contagion.

How far the alarming increase of the disease in Paisley, lately noticed in our Newspapers, has been owing to intercourse with Glasgow, it may be difficult to pronounce with certainty. The fact itself is, unhappily, too true, as appears from the following very accurate statement I owe to the politeness of a very intelligent Surgeon of that town, and one of the Members of the Fever Committee. This account, however, merely contains a list of those admitted since 1st January last, to the benefit of the Paisley Dispensary, and House of Recovery, taking no notice of those confined by the disorder, but unconnected with those Charities, though these last, as is well known, are at present, very numerous.

An Account of Fever Patients admitted to the benefit of the Paisley Dispensary, and House of Recovery, since 1st Jany. 1818.

JANY. 48	FEBY. 45	MARCH. 52	APRIL. 56	MAY. 88
JUNE. 63	JULY. 96	AUGT. 98	SEPT. 119	TOTAL. 665

and unexpected turns, and that some propitious change may ensue in the atmosphere, in the constitutions of men, or in both, of efficacy sufficient to produce a spontaneous cessation of the disease. The more we consider this reasoning, the more fallacious it will appear. As to the vaunted mildness of the distemper, the conclusion founded on it, we have seen completely disproved by the fatal experience of Ireland. In that country, where Typhus has appeared under a form so gigantic, that before it our own shrinks into a pygmy, and where, of course, the field of observation is wider, the cases, so far from abating in frequency, along with the lenity of symptoms, have, on the contrary, been enormously augmented. Nor has the sum of evil, in either country, been lessened to the poor, its principal victims, by this revolution of the disease. Fewer die, but more being precluded from their only mean of subsistence, daily labour, more are reduced by it to want, and misery. As to any antifebrile change that is to take place in the air around us, or in the bodily habit of individuals, I am unwilling to deny its possibility, yet I am unable to perceive on what grounds it is to be expected, on the present occasion. The whole weight of probability lies on the other side, and we are rather to look for an increase, than dimi-

nution, of our Epidemic: Thus, for a considerable time past, it has regularly doubled itself every year:—since you undertook your office, proceeding in a still greater ratio,* and so long as the seeds of its contagion are allowed to be scattered about in the same profusion, who shall assure us that it is to stop in its career? Besides the cold of winter is now fast approaching. Typhus is a favourite malady of northern climes, and inclement seasons. Hence it is generally observed to be aggravated by a low, and mitigated by a high temperature, and so much is this the case,

* That for several years back, our Epidemic has been doubling itself every year, has been shewn in another place: that, within the currency of the present year, it has been augmenting in a still greater proportion, will appear from the following list of admissions into the Relief Hospital, and Infirmary.

Admissions into the Relief Hospital, since its commencement,

28th March, till 29th Oct. 1818, inclusive,	481 Males,
	318 Females.
	<hr/>
	798 Total.

Admissions of Fever Patients into the Infirmary, since

1st Jany. till 30th Oct. 1818, inclusive,	495 Males,
	697 Females.
	<hr/>
	1191

The whole number of Fever Cases received into the Infirmary, during the year 1817; was only 714; it is evident that, this year, the proportion must have been not merely *doubled*, but more than *tripled*, had it not been for the aid of the Relief Hospital.

that till of late, when its poison has unfortunately acquired great additional activity, we have almost uniformly found it dying away in the summer, and again breaking out, in the winter portion, of the year. Much of its present lenity is, without doubt, owing to our long protracted heat, and may be expected to cease with the circumstance that gave it birth.* The numbers destined to become its victims, accordingly, during the ensuing months, so far from being diminished, will, on the contrary, be considerably encreased; the sum of contagion will be proportionably augmented, and the disease fostered anew, and invigorated, by the cold of winter, will proceed not only with more rapid strides, but with redoubled virulency.†

* I see by the evidence lately adduced, before the Fever Committee of the House of Commons, that in the opinion of the London Physicians, Typhus is most apt to become aggravated during the season of autumn. The cause of the unfavourable change remarked at that time, however, is precisely the same we observe to operate, with us, in winter, namely, cold; and consists merely of the chills of autumn supervening on the heats of summer. This testimony of the English Practitioners is a good deal contrary to our experience in Scotland, at least, in Glasgow. July, August, September, and October, are, in general, with us, by far the most healthy months out of the whole twelve.

† From unquestionable *data* already submitted to him, the reader must, by this time, have become enabled to form a tolerably correct estimate concerning the present enormous extent of our Epidemic. To assist him

If I am right in these observations, Gentlemen, and that I were wrong in every one of them, I should sincerely rejoice, you cannot but concur with me in the hopelessness of the plans you are now pursuing, and the consequent necessity of recurring to others. What those others ought to be, may be easily anticipated; you must at length resort to the expedient so often urged, that of suiting the magnitude of your accommodation to the extent of the disease, or you must fit up, in

in this inquiry, I have annexed the following brief Table, where the whole numbers of those affected with the disease, and of whom at the same time, an authentic register has been kept, may be seen, at a single glance.

Typhus Patients admitted into the Royal Infirmary, since Jan'y. 1st,	
till end of October 1818,.....	1192
Do. into Relief Hospital, from 28th	
March last, till end of October,	798
Under the care of District Surgeons, in general, since 28th	
March,	552
Treated by particular District Surgeon, mentioned above,	
since 1st of Oct. 1817, till 26th Oct. 1818,	750
	<hr/> 3292 Total.

With respect to the accuracy of the above numbers, no possible doubt can be entertained, but how many ought to be added to the list, taking in the whole others that have undergone the disease, in the wide bounds of our city, suburbs, adjacent villages and hamlets, or who have fallen under the care of each practitioner, separately, whether Licentiate, or regular Member of Faculty, or who have received no medical aid at all, it is extremely difficult to compute with exactness. Were I to state the

addition to your present, as many new Hospitals, as will be sufficient in capacity, to receive the whole three or four hundred Typhus patients, or whatever the number may be, now confined to their own habitations, within our city, suburbs, and adjoining villages, so as by completely insulating from the public the whole of these infected persons, and afterwards thoroughly cleansing their houses, furniture, &c. an effectual barrier may be, at last, put to the contagion. The period of seclusion, or quarantine, need not be long; (of course not for the same individuals, but only the same *number* of Typhus patients;) three or four months will suffice, and when this is accomplished, I venture to predict that the Fever, if not extirpated, will be robbed of nearly all its terrors, or, at least, reduced within such narrow limits, as to

entire number of persons, of every description, attacked by the malady, during the preceding twelvemonth, exclusive of those enumerated in the above Table, at 1000, or 1500, I would think I had committed no great error; nor do I conceive it rash to affirm, that considerably above *four thousand* individuals in all, about Glasgow and its neighbourhood, have suffered under this severe calamity, within the time now specified. Supposing the disease to augment with the same rapidity it has done for a good while past, and that no effectual means are taken to check its progress, how many it may seize upon, in the course of the ensuing year, it becomes painful to calculate—they cannot amount to less than *Eight thousand*, or *Ten thousand*. What proportion of the future sufferers will belong to the upper classes of society, time only can determine.

be easily kept in check by the Infirmary alone. If objections occur on account of expence, the plan, as may be readily demonstrated, will be found infinitely cheaper than your own. Thus your future expenditure, as was formerly shewn, cannot be less annually than £9360, but the measure now recommended requiring for completion three months only, will not cost more than £5460, and if from this be deducted, as it in fairness ought, what is now paid for maintaining during the same period of three months, the three hundred cases contained, or soon to be contained, in our existing Fever Receptacles, the surplus necessary will be merely £3120.—But I shall put an extreme case. Hitherto the disease has constantly outrun the accommodation, let the accommodation, for once, outrun the disease. Instead of seven hundred, the number the scheme now in contemplation supposes, provide *Wards at once for a thousand patients*. The money requisite for a three months confinement of a thousand patients, at your own rate of calculation, will be £7800, but to be rather above than below the estimate, and to cover all possible contingencies, let the sum allotted be £10,000, whence subtracting £2340, the allowance necessary for three months support of those at present under care (supposing the

number to be three hundred) the whole nett amount will be £7660, a sum less by £1700 than that you are now spending fruitlessly every year.

—Such is the whole charge required by the plan I now propose, not only for what may be termed the immediate, but the total suppression of our Fever, and if by this sacrifice, (call it £12,000, if you please, instead of £10,000,) the great, and opulent, city of Glasgow shall free itself from all danger, and all alarms, next winter, the exemption, I shall consider, as very cheaply purchased.

—Another financial advantage attending the measure is not unworthy notice. In consequence of averting the disease from multitudes that might otherwise be deprived by it of all capacity for bodily labour, it must act as a powerful preventive of poverty, or in other words, it must very much abridge the number of those who, from this cause, might, eventually, become a burden on the funds of the community.*

* Annexed to one of the London Hospitals (what is peculiarly denominated the *London*) as appears by the late Report, on Typhus, to the House of Commons, is an admirable Institution, called the *Samaritan Society*. It is the business of this Association, to assist those who are dismissed from the Hospital, and who though restored, more, or less, perfectly, to health, are destitute of every thing else. For this purpose, the Society supplies them with clothes, trusses if they be ruptured, and small sums of money,

Such, Gentlemen, is the plan I would recommend in preference to the one you have been so long ineffectually pursuing. Its superior advantages cannot fail to be manifest. Besides affording immediate relief to more than double the sick than have ever been, at one time, benefited by existing establishments, its success does not, like them, depend on a mere contingency, the spon-

either to support them, till they find employment, or that they may have an opportunity, if they be so inclined, or come from a distance, of returning home to their friends.—It seems hardly possible to overrate the merit of a Charity of this sort, founded alike on the most perfect humanity, and the most rational principles, and calculated, not only to relieve the suffering individual, but, by smoothing the road of honest industry, to act as a barrier against eventual crime, or misconduct, to numbers, in the poorer classes of society.—The author's attention was particularly attracted to this subject, in consequence of having frequently witnessed much distress, among those dismissed from our Infirmary here, for want of that assistance such a Society as the *Samaritan* would have afforded, and he has often thought that a similar Institution, would be of eminent usefulness, in Glasgow, as an addition, or Appendix, not only to the Establishment named, and to the Relief Hospital, but also to our *Jail*, *Bridewell*, and *Lock*.—Aware as he is, however, of the very heavy taxes of this sort already imposed on the Community, it is with the utmost reluctance, he even so much as suggests the least addition to the burden.—By way of removing any impediment, from this cause, to so beneficial a charity, he would simply venture to hint, that were half the sums yearly sent out of our city, on account of *Bible*, and *Missionary*, *Societies*, diverted, in future, to this purpose, a fund might speedily be raised, perfectly adequate to the maintenance of a *Glasgow Samaritan Society*.

taneous decline of the distemper, but founded on common sense, and the known laws of contagion, must be considered, if the scheme itself be under proper management, as little less than infallible.

Supposing the new plan adopted, the next consideration regards its execution. And here I must begin with recommending a re-organization of your Committee. Let it have the same advantages as other Boards of Health, in the addition of a due proportion of Medical members. This is a much better system than the present one of Assessors, or than the casual advice of Physicians, however able.—It is not enough that wholesome counsel be tendered, we must have security likewise that it is pursued, and for attaining this important purpose, there can be no certainty, unless medical men be constituted integrant members of your Board, with perfect parity of voice, and privilege, and that no meeting, at least where professional matters are discussed, be held without them. In this manner, these Gentlemen are brought under the same deep responsibility with yourselves, their characters being even more at stake, from the nature of the business, their exertions will be strenuous in proportion, and whatever benefit can accrue from their talents,

and experience, must be, thus, effectually secured to the public.—Neither is it reasonable that Gentlemen of Mercantile, or Manufacturing, profession, be held amenable for measures properly belonging to physic. From all such responsibility, they ought certainly to be exempted, but I would commit to them, exclusively, the whole financial concerns, or department, of the Committee.

In the event of our Fever Association being thus properly organized, the first measure, one hitherto too much overlooked, must be to open a liberal, and extensive, communication (always maintaining the old relations with the town districts) not only with our suburbs, but with the entire dense population, of our circumjacent villages, and hamlets. The reason is obvious: whatever contagion may spring up must be continually liable to overrun the whole region, and to suppress fever in the interior, all attempts must be vain, so long as it is allowed free access from without. The Committee, therefore, sitting constantly, as it were, in the centre, must exert a complete surveillance, not only over the circle in its more immediate vicinity, but over the wide circumference I have now described. In this manner, whatever vicissitudes the disorder may undergo, whatever

forms it may assume, becoming immediately known at Head Quarters, measures concerted in common, and mutually supporting each other, may be instantly taken, sufficient for every emergency. And this system must be continued, till the Epidemic is fairly exterminated. As to the methods, or means, of communication between the Central Association, and the surrounding Local authorities, no particular observations seem requisite; all such details will be more properly left to the Committee itself.

The only circumstance that now remains to be discussed, regards the modes of admission into the Fever Hospitals. This is a point I consider as of the utmost importance, since it is one, upon a due attention to which, the success of the whole scheme will very materially depend. At the same time, upon this subject, I have no new directions to offer, every thing necessary having been fully detailed in another place. The directions found there I have simply ordered to be reprinted. They are the following, and if fairly and fully complied with, I entertain no apprehension of failure from this source.

“ 1. The first relates to the facility of admission.

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Here every restriction must, at the very outset, be carefully removed. There must be no patronage of individuals: there must be no round-about application necessary to Magistrates, Governors, Clergymen, or Elders. The moment any person is discovered under Fever, he is to be sent to the nearest Depot, and for this purpose, every medical man whatever, whether of the city or suburbs, must be vested with the absolute, and unlimited power, of so transmitting him. In aid of this, every inducement to speedy removal must be held out to the patient, or his friends, to which a general understanding, that he is to meet with all manner of kindness, and accommodation, in the new Hospital, will materially contribute. Even small gratuities in money cannot be deemed improper.—The advantages, or rather necessity, of this speedy removal of the sick from their own dwellings to the Receiving House, it is impossible to enforce too strongly. Within the walls of the latter, every advantage of appropriate diet, medicine, and ventilation, is immediately secured to them, while an instant opportunity is afforded, of cleansing their former residence from the poison they may have previously generated; and of course, thus extinguishing, one after another, each separate focus, or centre, of contagion. After

long sickness, too, the pressure of want often compels the poor to sell various articles of clothing, furniture, &c. so as thus to disseminate the disease in all directions, and to an unknown extent. From the speedy removal of the sick to an Hospital, also, an additional benefit accrues to the public, of no mean value, that the infected person ceases any longer to be dangerous. He becomes, by this mean, secluded from society, like the lepers of old, or he may be said to be in a state of quarantine. The links that bound him to the world, in relations, friends, and acquaintances, are, for the time being, entirely disjoined, or snapped asunder; and all medium of communication being thus destroyed, he can now no longer propagate his disorder.—By the regulation I recommend, then, it becomes evident, that the interest of the patient, and the safety of the public, must be equally consulted. With respect to the first, it is well known, that the earlier in its progress the disease is attacked, the more readily it yields to medicine, while if it be suffered to run its course, without interruption, every mode of checking it, or saving the sick, becomes too often abortive; and with regard to the latter, it is no less true, that the longer the malady lasts, the more infection is produced, and the greater risk

of the distemper spreading, is incurred. Humanity to the individual, then, and a regard for the interest of the public, alike concur in urging the speediest possible removal of every Typhus Patient to some one of the Receiving Houses."

As to the site of these Receiving Houses, enough has been said in the Pamphlet whence the above observations are extracted, and to that the author begs leave to refer. On the present occasion, it will be sufficient to remark, that, in order to avoid the risks already shewn to attend the transport of Patients from too great a distance, the Buildings allotted for the purpose of Fever Receptacles, ought to be all selected from among those placed as near as possible to the various principal seats of the contagion.

Since the present Letter was preparing for the press, I am informed, Gentlemen, that you have commenced a new scheme, in some measure, founded on the principles above inculcated. This scheme consists, as I am told, in secluding, within your Hospitals, the whole infected of every individual district, taking each district separately, and in succession, so as gradually, though finally, to banish Fever from the city.—In the consum-

mation of such a plan every one must rejoice, yet various, and almost insurmountable, obstacles, evidently oppose its success. One is the necessary slowness of the process. From this cause, during the time requisite for clearing each particular Ward, the disease, by neglect, cannot fail to accumulate, and spread wider, through the others. Even after one, or more, districts, have been actually purified, how are you to cut off all communication with the rest, where contagion still continues—a contingency, I hold, impossible to be guarded against, unless you mean to draw a cordon of troops round each department free of Fever, and keep them there, day and night, till such time as you think all danger has ceased? It must be considered, too, that our Epidemic prevails not only in the city itself, but throughout the whole dense population of our surrounding suburbs, villages, and hamlets, and after you have expelled it from the former, how are you to prevent its re-entrance from the latter? If you reply, by a similar purification, it cannot escape attention, that your process for the purpose, is, by your plan, so exceedingly slow, and the field of your labours, the whole region overrun by Typhus, so large, that a very considerable period must be required for its completion; while, in the mean

time, the disorder left to itself, must continually rally behind your backs, and, in all quarters, will, inevitably, rear a more formidable front than ever, except, perhaps, within the circumscribed spot that happens to be the immediate scene of your operations.

Such are some of the obstacles that threaten the miscarriage of your plan, in which, besides the weighty objection of its obstructing more effectual measures, I confess, I repose not the slightest confidence, unless, by some extraordinary coincidence, the disease, during its execution, should happen to die away of itself. Did it present the least hope of success, I should be the last to oppose its adoption, for, after all, I hold it matter of utter indifference, by what means our Epidemic is suppressed, provided so desirable an end be actually accomplished.—In the mean time, however, there are one or two questions that can hardly fail of occurring, on the present occasion, to every inhabitant of Glasgow. If the plan you are now pursuing be the proper one for exterminating our Fever, it may be fairly asked, why has it been so long delayed; why was it not adopted the moment you assumed your office, when, from the more circumscribed prevalence of the disorder,

it was so much the more likely to prove successful; and why has the precious period of the last seven months, the whole term of your existence, been wasted by your Committee, so far as this grand object of your labours is concerned, absolutely in doing nothing?

I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

&c. &c.

RICHARD MILLAR.

GLASSFORD-STREET, 12th Nov. 1818.

